

REMARKS

Claims 23-24, 27, 30 and 31 are amended. Claims 38-53 are added. Claims 16-17, 23-25, 27, 30-31, and 33-53 are pending. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicants thank Examiner Preblic for indicating that Claims 16 and 17 are allowable over the prior art.

The rejection of Claims 23-25, 30-31 and 33-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Lerman is believed to be obviated by the above amendment. Further, Lerman fails to disclose or suggest the claimed invention as clarified by the following remarks.

Lerman discloses, at best, a temporary post-operative stump sock for amputee (see Abstract). More specifically, the stump sock disclosed by Lerman has a five-layer structure including a base layer, a first layer of a soft, flexible, porous material overlying the base layer, and a protective second layer of flexible fabric overlying the base layer (see column 2, lines 14-22). Further, the sock disclosed by Lerman clearly requires an adhesive between the base layer and the first layer of soft, flexible, porous material and an adhesive between the base layer and the second layer of a flexible fabric overlying the base layer (see column 2, lines 40-49, Figures 4 and 7, and column 4, lines 9-36). Accordingly, Lerman teaches that there is no direct coating of the first and second layers onto the base layer and that the first layer of the five-layer structure is porous.

In direct contrast, the claimed invention relates to a tubed sock-shaped covering that may contain a fabric that is coated with a polymeric material (see amended Claim 23 above). The claimed polymeric material which coats the inside of the fabric may be nonperforated, nonporous, nonfoamed, and/or cushioning polymeric material (see the amended and new claims above); and, the claimed covering may be coated directly on its inside surface with the polymeric material (see new Claims 38-53). Finally, the claimed covering may be made by a

process of contacting an inside surface of the fabric contained therein into a melt of the claimed polymeric material (see Claim 50 above).

In light of the above, it is clear that Lerman fails to disclose or suggest the claimed invention. More specifically, Lerman discloses a sock that contains a five-layer structure, while the present invention may contain a three-layer structure. Further, Lerman specifically states that the first layer is “a soft, flexible, porous material overlying a first face of the base layer” (see column 2, lines 18-21). Further, this disclosure by Lerman also teaches away from the claimed invention because it teaches that the material must be “porous to air and water” (See column 4, lines 9-36). Clearly, such a disclosure cannot possibly motivate one reading Lerman to obtain the claimed invention which specifies that a fabric is coated with a nonporous and/or nonperforated polymeric material. Additionally, Lerman specifically discloses a sock that is formed by an overlaid and seamed composite material (see column 2, lines 22-25). Therefore, Lerman specifically teaches away from the claimed sock having any seamless character whatsoever.

In addition, the Examiner’s attention is directed to Figures 4 and 7, and column 4, lines 9-36, of the Lerman reference. Therein, Lerman specifically states that adhesive layers are required between the base layer and each of the first and second layers, respectively, thus producing the five-layered structure. When reading this disclosure, one would certainly not be motivated to directly coat the claimed covering with the claimed polymeric material because Lerman specifically teaches that adhesive layers are necessary therebetween. Still further, Lerman discloses that the preferred outer layer is made of Tricot which is woven, while Applicants have specifically claimed non-woven materials in Claim 37 of the present application. Finally, Lerman fails to mention whatsoever that the covering has a docking means directly contacting it so as to provide attachment of an external device to the covering.

In fact, there is no disclosure whatsoever in the Lerman reference that provides motivation to a reader to directly contact a means for docking to the covering itself.

In light of the above, all of the pending claims are free from disclosure and/or suggestion of Lerman. In fact, Lerman expressly teaches away from the claimed invention as discussed above. Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

The rejection of Claims 24, 25, 27, 31, 34, and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Handal is believed to be obviated by the above amendment. Further, Handal fails to disclose or suggest the claimed invention as clarified by the following remarks.

Handal discloses, at best, a form-fitting residual limb socket or shell containing a light weight resinous material (see Abstract). The socket or shell disclosed by Handal may contain a liner. However, Handal et al. specifically states that this liner “may be made of resilient, fairly rigid foam rubber, crosslinked polyethylene or the like” (see column 3, lines 40-42). However, Handal completely fails to provide a disclosure and/or suggestion to its reader that the liner may contain a fabric where the liner is coated on the inside thereof with polymeric material. At best, Handal discloses that its liner may be made of a polymeric material and teaches that this polymeric material must be rigid.

In direct contrast, the claimed covering contains a fabric and the covering is coated on the inside surface with a polymeric material. Since Handal fails to disclose or suggest a covering containing a fabric where the covering is also coated on the inside surface with polymeric material, Handal clearly fails to disclose or suggest the claimed invention. Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

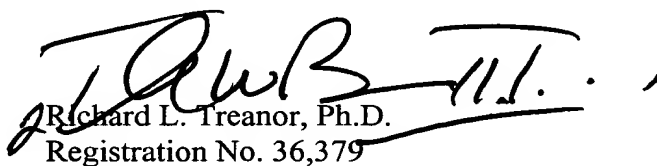
The rejection of Claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is believed to be obviated by the above amendment. More specifically, Claim 27 has been amended to specify

that the claimed bosses or annular rings are at a position along an outside surface of the prosthetic socket. It should be noted that such an amendment was suggested by the Examiner at page 2 of the outstanding Office Action for which Applicants are grateful to the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested. Should anything further be required to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.


Richard L. Treanor, Ph.D.
Registration No. 36,379

Thomas W. Barnes
Registration No. 52,595



22850

(703) 413-3000

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Marked-Up Copy
Serial No: 09/418,505
Amendment Filed Herewith

IN THE CLAIMS

--23. (Twice Amended) A tube sock-shaped covering for enclosing an amputation stump, said covering having an open end for introduction of said stump and a closed end opposite said open end, said covering comprising fiber-on-end fabric, said covering being coated on the inside thereof with a nonperforated or nonporous polymeric material.

24. (Twice Amended) A tube sock-shaped covering for enclosing an amputation stump, said covering having an open end for introduction of said stump and a closed end opposite said open end, said covering comprising a fabric and having a docking means for attachment of an external device to the covering, and said covering being coated on the inside thereof with polymeric material.

27. (Twice Amended) A tube sock-shaped covering for enclosing an amputation stump, said covering having an open end for introduction of said stump and a closed end opposite said open end, said covering comprising a fabric and being coated on the inside thereof with polymeric material having one or more bosses or annular rings for joining to a prosthetic socket, wherein said one or more bosses or annular rings are at a position along an outside surface of the prosthetic socket.

30. (Amended) A tube sock-shaped covering for enclosing an amputation stump, said covering having an open end for introduction of said stump and a closed end opposite said open end, said covering comprising fabric that can adhere to a hook portion of a hook and loop fastening system, said covering being coated directly on the inside thereof with a polymeric material.

31. (Amended) A tube sock-shaped covering for enclosing an amputation stump, said covering having an open end for introduction of said stump and a closed end opposite said open end, said covering comprising fabric and one or more high wear resistant areas, said covering being coated directly on the inside thereof in at least one of the one or more high wear resistant areas with a polymeric material.

38-53. (New).--